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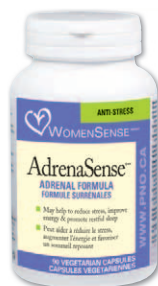
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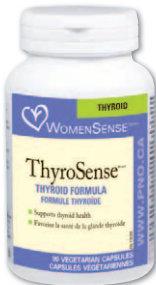
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2013 New Beginnings

May your blessed dreams come true in this
exciting New Year. – *Joseph Roberts, publisher*

Clover Fairy, photo by Tara Williams

Totally at home in a cabbage patch, the
Child of the Earth on our cover represents the
sustainability and self-reliance inherent in the
Nelson Land Group's vision statement: "Imagine a
neighbourhood with a mix of children and elders and
everybody in between, where you can live, work,
play, grow all your food, raise kids, and grow old,
where so much of what you need is within walking
distance and your own home helps to create a more
sustainable society." Check out their website at
www.nelsonlandgroup.com.

Another dream is also beginning in Squamish
where a shared community dedicated to further
awakening of life's purpose is being envisioned.
Contact them at thespiritualcentre@icloud.com

The future belongs to those who believe in the
beauty of their dreams. – *Eleanor Roosevelt*

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You are here to enable the divine purpose
of the universe to unfold. That is how
important you are! – *Eckhart Tolle*



Talk with integrity

Be impeccable with your word – Miguel Ruiz

The only way we can share ourselves with another or demonstrate who we are is through communication. It is the way we get to know others and the way they come to know us. We feel we have good communication with another when we understand each other. We feel close when we sense another person “gets” us.

In order for this to happen, there must be some measure of good will between the parties. There must be the intent that we care enough to take the time to truly hear what the other is saying. We must believe that what they have to say is just as important as what we have to say. This results in a sense of collaboration and support. We feel friendly. Communication, when used in this way, brings people or groups together, builds bridges and moves things forward.

Communication can also be used in ways that create roadblocks, destroy bridges and keep things stuck. Worse still, it can be used as a weapon. This negative

Positive communication involves... owning
what is ours and taking responsibility for our
own mistakes or part in the problem.


form of communication happens when ego is driving the process, which becomes about overpowering, winning, manipulating or controlling. There is no genuine interest in really understanding the other's point of view; rather, it is about proving the rightness of one's own position.

Naturally, this creates distance, distrust, frustration and, ultimately, conflict. The way we communicate with others gives them a sense of how much we value or care about them and says a lot about the kind of person we are. The issue in question may ultimately be resolved, but the image we have created of ourselves remains in the other persons' mind.

Poor communication may be characterized by lack of self-awareness, needing to be right or trying to win, defensiveness vs. addressing another's concerns, over-generalizing with “you always” or “you never” statements, blaming, attacking, mind reading, psychoanalyzing, not listening and stonewalling by refusing to talk.

Positive communication involves listening carefully and trying to understand the other's point of view, using “I” messages rather than starting sentences with “you,” looking for compromise, being patient, responding to criticism with empathy and acknowledging the pain or discomfort being expressed, owning what is ours and taking responsibility for our own mistakes or part in the problem.

Interestingly, we learn to follow rules in other areas of life: not cutting ahead of others in lineups, not taking things that do not belong to us, etc. However, when it comes to communicating in difficult situations and especially with those closest to us, if there were referees, there would be red flags all over the field!

It is much easier to communicate nicely when all is well. It is when we are in conflict that we most need to draw on our very best communication skills. When we are upset, we need to get ego in check and not allow it to use words to further its own self-interested ends. We need to rise into our highest selves and choose to be the one to remain in integrity, regardless of what the other is doing. This is one of the most loving things you can do – to hold that space of integrity even when someone else cannot. 

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, “Deep Powerful Change” hypnosis CDs and new “Creating Healthy Relationships” series, visit www.gwen.ca See display ad this issue.

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Briefing Notes on Prescription Drugs

For a prevention propaganda-free year

2012 is behind us, thank goodness. And what a year it's been. I have anointed it "The Year of Prevention Propaganda." Wikipedia tells us propaganda is "a form of communication that is aimed at influencing the attitude of a community toward some cause or position by presenting only one side of an argument." The problem is, when it comes to preventing illness, propaganda doesn't work. It's like polluted water laden with parasites, bacteria and viruses that can make you very sick.

In 2012, we saw a lot of propaganda designed to influence our attitudes around preventive medicine, much of it awash in language hard to defy because it sounds so authoritative and wholesome. After all, why wouldn't you want to prevent disease instead of treating it?

Two impressive victories in the prevention propaganda war concerned widely promoted forms of medical screening, which promise to save us from the scourge of cancer. These victories reveal the large gaps between what many specialists say – about getting a mammogram or a PSA test – and the evidence gleaned from high-quality screening research. The year's biggest triumph came when Danish researcher Peter C. Gøtzsche published an editorial in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*

noting, "The best method we have to reduce the risk of breast cancer is to stop the screening program." He threw down the gauntlet by asking readers – mostly Canadian doctors – one simple question: "Which country will be first to stop mammography screening?"

Remember, mammography screening is looking for disease in otherwise healthy women.

Also in 2012, the PSA test – to evaluate a man's level of 'prostate specific antigen,' a potential sign of prostate cancer – was deemed to cause more harm than good when the major independent screening group in the US – the United States Preventive Services Task force (USPSTF) – concluded it shouldn't be offered to otherwise healthy, asymptomatic men. There is a great danger that men might be harmed through unnecessary treatment, which can often result in incontinence, impotence or both.

Remember, PSA screening is looking for disease in otherwise healthy men.

Essentially, the cleanest, most reliable, research around breast and prostate cancer screening programs showed they are probably harmful for most people being screened. We learned that the tests being promoted often find "pseudodisease" – things in your blood or body that would never have gone on to hurt you. Overly aggressive

screening often leads to unnecessary breast and prostate cancer biopsies, surgeries, chemotherapies and drugs.

There is still a lot of enthusiasm for screening and much polluted information around its alleged benefits. Cancer is not unique and whenever anyone is recommending a screening test for things like Alzheimer's, ADHD, pre-diabetes, osteoporosis and many other conditions, remember that all forms of screening involve harm.

Should we still try to eat well, exercise and reduce stress in our lives? Of course. We know those things provide our best means of staying well. Should we be vigilant about signs of disease? Certainly. If you have any worrisome symptoms whatsoever or think you are at 'high risk' due to a unique family history, you should ask your doctor about that risk and what you can do to lower it. If you are feeling perfectly healthy, should you blindly accept the advice that a preventive screening test will "save your life?" Absolutely not.

In 2012, we also saw prevention propaganda emanating from the vaccine world. This propaganda is characterized by oceans of information that appear very authoritative, but is often acutely unhelpful. Preventive propaganda has some characteristic signs: it is information that makes the dangers of the disease seem as horrible as

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possible. The benefits (of the vaccine) sound too good to be true. The controversies are skirted and harms are either downplayed or dismissed. Once you are aware the information is potentially polluted, you might be less likely to swallow a lot of it.

Vaccines are a huge and growing industry. Recent vaccine marketing reports say the global vaccine market is currently worth about \$34 billion per year and will rise to over \$40 billion in the next few years.

We also saw advertisements asking older people to get vaccinated for shingles, a painful and sometimes debilitating viral disease. While shingles can make you very miserable, complications from it are fairly rare and the vaccine is barely effective (five in 1,000 might benefit annually). And yet there are reports of people getting the shot and still getting shingles, as well as reports of people being injured by the vaccine.

Remember, these are otherwise healthy, older people.

In 2012, we saw waves of professional endorsements of the HPV vaccine from those who say girls need it to avoid the virus associated with the development of cervical cancer. One website supported by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (hpvinfo.ca) tells us “Vaccines have been developed to prevent you from contracting the HPV virus and could dramatically help reduce the incidence of HPV-related complications such as genital and anal warts and cervical cancer.”

A search of the site delivers little more than dramatically murky propaganda with no reference to the many unanswered questions about the effectiveness and safety of the two HPV vaccines. It also doesn't say that there hasn't been one trial that showed any difference in cervical cancer rates due to the vaccine and that many groups are demanding better research around the vaccine's safety. According to the National Vaccine Information Center (www.Nvic.org), in the US, as of August 2012, “There have been a total of 26,304 reports made to the federal Vac-

**Let's make a pledge in 2013: let's pledge to resist
the pervasive pull of preventive propaganda.**

Let's avoid information that is polluted.

cine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS)” associated with HPV vaccines, including 118 deaths.

Remember, these are healthy, young girls being asked to take this vaccine.


In 2012, we saw public health authorities praising the value of the annual flu shot and in some instances implementing flu polices in very heavy-handed ways. Admittedly, this vaccine is designed to prevent infection by a very slippery, constantly changing virus; the flu itself is mostly bothersome and rarely fatal.

When the authorities fail to come clean about the uncertainty or safety of a vaccine, it smells an awful lot like propaganda. In 2012, the American actor Andy Griffith died. While that might not be important to you, he is probably the most famous person to have ever come down with Guillain Barré syndrome (GBS), which he suffered in the 1980s and was left paralyzed for many months. In the last three years, there has been an increase in the number of reports of GBS in people who had taken the H1N1 “swine flu” vaccine and the 2010/11 seasonal flu shot containing the pandemic H1N1 strains. The rates of GBS in current flu vaccines are said to be “extremely rare.” We hope so.

Remember, these are otherwise healthy people of all ages.

I leave you with this last word on prevention propaganda: it might not make you sick, but it is the very opposite of proper, informed consent. Propaganda is like polluted water and citizens who want to make informed decisions about their own preventive healthcare need access to clean, clear facts as urgently as we need clean, clear water to live.

Let's make a pledge in 2013: let's pledge to resist the pervasive pull of preventive propaganda. Let's avoid information that is polluted. Do you still want to be “proactive” about your health? Then remember that any ‘preventive’ treatment offered to already healthy people must come with crystal-clear information that provides unequivocal evidence of effectiveness and safety.

Let's brand 2013 as the year of living cleanly, without preventive propaganda. 

Alan Cassels is the author of Seeking Sickness: Medical Screening and the Misguided Hunt for Disease.

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The Centre: awakening to our life's purpose



An Invitation to Consider Living in an Intentional Community in Squamish, British Columbia

Plans with architects and city planners in the District of Squamish are underway to create a non-denominational spiritual community for adults. Are you interested in a life of simplicity, spiritual practice, contemplation and service? Do you value being part of a community which welcomes all spiritual teachings that bring peace, love and compassion to the earth? Would you like to live in an apartment you own within a building housing other like-minded women and men like yourself?

The intention is for *The Centre* to be a warm, vibrant and welcoming spiritual space with opportunities for regular meditation, chanting, dancing, yoga, Tai Chi, singing, sharing meals, music from all traditions, and celebrating together in a variety of ways. The potential is enormous and the possibilities are exciting. Shared values include embracing diversity, respect and compassion for all, and finding meaning in life through a unity of purpose and a commitment to service. This shared community welcomes those who follow all spiritual paths and the teachings of all spiritual teachers, writers and poets including Rumi, Eckhart Tolle, Amma, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Hafiz, the Dalai Lama, Louise Hay, Joanna Macy, Thich

Nhat Hanh, Rabbi Michael Lerner, and many others. We are seeking interest from adults who want to live and work together in an intentional community to focus on their spiritual growth, selfless service in our own community and the community at large.

You are invited to picture this: a beautiful, new modern, four-story, environmentally friendly and sustainable building with a centre courtyard and a rooftop garden, containing the following:

- 40 individually owned apartments (either 600 or 900sq. ft.) available at market value
- Multipurpose hall for spiritual services, weddings, retreats, meditation, lectures, concerts
- Public restaurant with open kitchen – bakery, bookstore and art gallery
- Resident vegetarian kitchen for preparation of communal meals
- Multipurpose meeting rooms and classrooms
- Studios for holistic healing practitioners
- Large yoga and Tai Chi studio
- Retreat centre with 36 individual small guest rooms
- Hot-tub

The geographic location of *The Centre* is in a beautiful setting and steeped in sacred energy. Squamish is a growing municipality of 17,000 people situated where the Pacific Ocean meets the majestic mountains between the city of Vancouver and the Whistler/

Blackcomb ski resort area. Squamish means “Mother of Wind” in the Coast Salish language. The location of *The Centre* is one block walking distance from the ocean, a bird sanctuary, a marina, and with access to countless local outdoor recreational activities and many nearby services and amenities. It is a very good fit for an intentional spiritual community.

It is anticipated that a branch of the Centre for Spiritual Living will be one of the tenants at *The Centre*, using the large multipurpose space on the ground floor for Sunday morning services and regular activities. The CSL mission is to: celebrate spirit, transform lives and create community, with core values of: community, integrity, love, spiritual growth and spiritual practice. (www.csl.org) Both residents and the public will be invited to participate in any of the programs offered by the Centre for Spiritual Living.

Are you curious? Interested? A soul-seeker? Wanting to deepen your spiritual practices in a like-minded community? Looking for a change in your life? This is an opportunity for a thoughtful and engaged group of people to create something unique and life affirming. We would love to hear from you. thespiritualcentre@icloud.com

Expressions of interest in residence or participation in “The Centre” in other capacities can be directed to: thespiritualcentre@icloud.com.

Good Eats *La Dolce Vita*

Alastair Gregor

FOOD

It's time to start the New Year off right by achieving your goals of getting healthy and losing weight. Firstly let's start with a couple of cleanses. The first is to remove all temptations, clean out your cupboards, freezer and fridge of all that is sugary, tempting and unhealthy.

The second is personal, to cleanse your liver which is responsible for over 500 jobs, from balancing hormones and processing of every drop of blood in your body, to all the foods you eat. Cleansing the liver is like cleaning out your drain, unplugging your pipes, and letting the toxins out; everything just flows smoothly again. You will feel cleaner, lighter, happier and healthier. Remember when you start detoxifying you may often feel worse before you feel better as your body is letting go of toxins. It is important during this time to drink plenty of pure water to flush the toxins from your system, and get plenty of rest.

Go to your natural health store and pick up a good liver detox kit; the Wild Rose Herbal D-Tox 12 day Program worked well for me by cleansing the liver, kidneys and lymph system. I liked this especially as it has a food guide in the box which you can take with you while shopping. I followed it with their Cand-Aid Candida cleanse, (sugar

detox). I did these two cleanses back to back and lost 21 lbs in 27 days and felt great.

Remember to be patient with yourself; it takes time for healing, for inflammation to go down, to feel better. Stick with it. January is not the time for spontaneity; it is the time for planning. Planning your meals and preparing them ahead of time. Telling those around you what you are doing helps, as does being aware of what your eating by reading labels.

Welcome the change, don't take days off, don't reward yourself with old habits. Carry healthy snacks with you, and if you slip up, forgive yourself and get back up. Stick with it. Keep drinking water, hydrate your joints, your eyes and your body. Before long your skin will look better and your sleeping, thinking, digestion and physical agility will improve. Remember size is no obstacle to desire, you can do anything you want. Envision your life as you would like it to be. You may find it difficult at first, but you will find it's easier to get back on track by clearly defining your lifestyle goals, daily, weekly, monthly and yearly. This is your journey, don't let anyone else side track you.

In the process of doing the cleanse you may wish to consider going strictly organic, eating only chemical-free

whole foods and taking your diet entirely gluten-free. Gluten intolerance and celiac disease has been tied to over 190 auto-immune disorders. If you have problems and your doctors can't figure out what's wrong then pay attention at this time of cleansing. You may notice many of your symptoms clear up and you feel better than you have in years. However, if you go gluten-free and do not heal, then it may be necessary to further investigate your diet to address the root causes rather than the symptoms.

Eating sprouted grains, seeds and legumes is super healthy. Germination breaks down the harsh protective coatings of the seed, greatly increasing enzyme content which aids in digestion and nutrient absorption levels. Try sprouting; soak overnight in pure water with a capful of raw apple cider vinegar to speed up nature's sprouting process. Add to salads, share, enjoy.

Educate yourself, research, exercise, play, experiment, and enjoy your journey to good health! alastair@commonground.ca

To advertise your restaurant, food product or service in our Good Eats section, please contact food writer Chef **Alastair Gregor** at alastair@commonground.ca. Alastair's life-long passion for food was inherited from his grandmother.



Realize your potential

As a seed is capable of becoming a tree, all human beings are also capable of realizing their own full potential. In order for the seed to become a tree, it must be planted in the soil, underground, in the dark and almost forgotten. In relationship with the earth, the seed surrenders its separateness, its identity, its individuality and its ego. In fact, the seed allows itself to become one with the earth. Only then its hidden energy bursts open and we see green shoots emerging like a miracle. – Satish Kumar, from Thousand Branches, Million Plums

To a gardener who grows trees from seed, these words resonate deeply with me at the dawning of 2013. Satish Kumar's words so eloquently describe the shift we must make to avert our current planetary crises. We simply need to surrender our separateness in relation with the earth. Today, our high speed, highly industrialized and technical world constantly distracts us, as witnessed by the sweeping addiction to constantly being "connected." All this noise distracts us from taking time to be quiet and still. But it is only when we take this time that we can really think clearly about what's going on.

May we be like the seed becoming a tree,
allowing our hidden energy to burst open to "see
green shoots emerging like a miracle."

Today's political inertia in facing the inherent problems that accompany glacial meltdown and climate change absolutely scares me. Where's the appropriate leadership we need? Business as usual simply won't solve any of these problems and the longer we procrastinate, the worse it's going to get! So will we see the miraculous unfolding of the seed of human potential? I'd like to believe we wouldn't wait until we are staring disaster in the face.

I thought it strange when I heard elders say after World War Two, "They were the best days of our lives." Surely, they could not have been referring to all the death, chaos and destruction? I think that when they heard the rallying cry to come together for victory, they surrendered their individuality and egos to the common cause. As a result of making the shift from "me" to "we," they were able to practise the simple principles of living in harmony – cooperation, collaboration and community – what I call the 3 Cs. I imagine creating fellowship and camaraderie feels really good and this was what they were referring to as "the best days of their lives."

So here's my rallying cry to come together to strengthen our resilience to the unknown effects of climate change. Here are six steps you can take if you truly want to stay connected without an app!

1) Join the common cause and commit your actions to fighting climate change. 2) Reshape the existing paradigm of 'it's all about money' to 'it's all about quality of life.' 3) Create a vision for the world you want to see. 4) Find your voice and step into your power to unfold the seed of your human potential. 5) Practise cooperation and collaboration and engage in community. 6) Plant a "Garden of Eating" and go back to earth and surrender your separateness.

Simple practice: Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand.

Here's my prayer for 2013: May we be like the seed becoming a tree, allowing our hidden energy to burst open to "see green shoots emerging like a miracle." Happy New Year! ☺

Carolyn Herriot is the author of **The Zero-Mile Diet: A Year-round Guide to Growing Organic Food** and **The Zero-Mile Diet Cookbook: A Seasonal Guide to Delicious Homegrown Food** (Harbour Publishing). www.seedsofvictoria.com



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Prickles & Goo

In a clip from a 1965 NFB documentary on Leonard Cohen, CBC interviewer and journalist Pierre Berton asks the Montreal poet what he's "concerned about."

"I haven't a single concern," the 31-year-old verse-herder responds in a subdued voice.

"Well, come now, what do you care about really?" Berton blusters. "Don't you care about anything? How can you be a good poet and not care about anything?"

"No, no... I do the poetry and you do the commentary," Cohen parries politely, but his inquisitor refuses to buy it, insisting, "How can you write poetry if you're not bothered by anything?"

"My first concern in the morning is to discover whether or not I'm in a state of grace. And if I make that investigation and discover that I'm not in the state of grace, I'm better in bed," Cohen explains.

Looking both annoyed and confused, the CBC pundit demands to know what the poet means by a "state of grace," something "I have never understood," he adds.

Cohen: "A state of grace is that kind of balance with which you ride the chaos you find around you. It's not a matter of resolving the chaos, because there is something arrogant and warlike about putting the world in order, that kind of... it's like an escaped ski, going through the contours of..."

"You have lost me," Berton interrupts. Too bad; it would have been interesting to find out where Cohen was going with the escaped ski simile. Perhaps downhill in Berton's direction.

To my grandparents' generation, the poet's response about balance and grace might as well have been a transmission from Neptune. Today, it's a commonplace you might hear from a West Van matron carrying a yoga mat. In any case, the exchange between the two men demonstrated a long-standing stereotype: that good journalists are focused on the "five Ws" (Who, What, When, Where, Why – and How) while respectable artists are concerned with broader textures of context and feeling. To overgeneralize somewhat, newshounds are after fast facts and a paycheck, while sonneteers hope for a bardic buzz and a government grant.

In his 2010 book, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*, neuroscientist Iain McGilchrist traces the major divides in western history to a literal rift in the brain. The left hemisphere is in the bucket seat of logical reasoning and precise language, while over on the passenger side, the right



hemisphere is humming a folk song and grooving on the scenery. Whether it's reporting versus poetry, classicism versus romanticism, mannerism versus expressionism or capitalism versus socialism, all our dualisms are traceable to a fissure in the cortex, the author argues.

The only problem with this intriguing theory is that many brain scientists now reject the tidy, seventies-era dualism of left/right brain. Studies of neuroplasticity have indicated that each hemisphere has the capacity to take on the skills of the other after injury or illness. In other words, it's an open question how much we can project this neural divide onto the cultural screen, without overleveraging the data.

In a radio talk from the sixties, Zen philosopher Alan Watts offered another angle for looking at this epistemic rift within our culture and ourselves.

"You see," said Watts in his eloquent speaking voice, "in the history of philosophy and poetry and art, we always find the interchange of two personality types which I call 'prickles' and 'goo.' The prickly people are

A Zen angle on Life, The Universe, & Everything

advocates of intellectual porcupinism; they want rigor, they want p-r-r-ecise sta-tis-tics, and they have a certain clipped attitude in their voices, and you know this very well in academic circles, where there are people who are always edgy like that. And they accuse other people of being disgustingly vague and miasmic and mystical. But the vague, miasmic and mystical people accuse the prickly people of being mere skeletons with no flesh on their bones."

Pierre Berton was prickly. Leonard Cohen was, and presumably still is, gooey.

Although both varieties are found across the political spectrum, the prickly people tend to the right and the goo people tend to the left. The divide is not limited to politics, Watts observed. "So therefore if you belong to the prickly type you hope that the ultimate constituents of matter are particles. If you are the gooey type you hope it's waves... And in philosophy, prickly people are logical positivists and goo people are idealists."

Of course, the universe often doesn't abide by our neatly defined categories. Subatomic particles behave like particles or waves depending on how scientists measure them. No one understands how electrons, photons and other entities can demonstrate such contradictory properties in the lab – particles and waves are literally as unlike as baseballs and Bach fugues, after all – but the numbers work. Like it or not, the universe is composed of something weirder

than Fred MacMurray's Flubber.

Watts understood this – that nothing is exclusively goo or exclusively prickles. Everything is composed of "gooey prickles and prickly goo," he insisted.

No animal would survive for long if its nervous system did not accurately reflect and report on its environment. That is the evolutionary foundation for our prickly aspects, which manifest in our daily lives as a baseline alertness and protectiveness. Without this mode of being, and the analytic consciousness built upon it, we wouldn't have much of a civilization. You can't leave just-in-time inventory and double-entry book-keeping to the gooey folks.

Yet an over-prickly response to the world has its downside; it crops up in our belief systems as scientific materialism, religious fundamentalism and right-wing militancy.

In contrast, gooey thinking is nonlinear, intuitive and provisional. On the upside, it keeps one free from a conceptual "hardening of the categories," and allows for new

worlds of perception and discovery. It draws on bodily knowledge; scientists have discovered that a “gut feeling” turns out to be more than a metaphor. There is a cluster of some 100 million neurons in the gastrointestinal area that function as a secondary brain, the “enteric nervous system.” A similar network of neurons is found in the region of the heart. (Chakras, anyone?) Albert Einstein once wrote that his initial grasp of relativity was a kinesthetic image, a peculiar feeling he would get through his body.

On the downside, some gooey thinkers fall prey to “apophenia,” the habit of seeing meaningful patterns or connections in random or meaningless data. Psychologists consider this unwarranted pattern-finding a hallmark of mental illness. At the very least, it’s a signal the seeker is wandering down the garden path towards Chapel Perilous.

Consider the prickly/goopy exchange between Berton and Cohen above. The reporter insists it is the responsibility of the engaged, intelligent person to be irritated by what’s going on, presumably with a mind to fix it. The rhymester counters it is necessary for him to cultivate a stillness within, to find the right bodily and mental orientation for navigating the world. These aren’t mutually exclusive viewpoints. “I arise in the morning,” wrote essayist E. B. White, “torn between a desire to save the world and an inclination to savor it.”

We are creatures of inconsistent, but complementary, habits of thought. Our lives get crazy when one mode of thought dominates the other – and there’s no denying we live in crazy times. Over the past 50 years, the western world has taken all the best prickly aspects of the Enlight-

enment – empirical reasoning and free enquiry – and turned them into the handmaidens of command-and-control social programming.

We live in an era of data-massaging medical researchers, fact-fudging policy wonks and cherry-picking economists. Experts in the pay of large corporations get onto radio, TV and appear in print marshalling numbers in support of their arguments, while their opponents marshal numbers of their own to prove the precise opposite. Public relations firms, advertising agencies and corporate, co-opted university research departments have turned digits into foot soldiers, marching them off to conquer the public mind. It’s a war for mindshare and even the left speaks the same language about polls, percentage gains and market share.

Have we become a bit too prickly for our own good?

In contrast, nuanced, philosophical enquiry (think of Henry David Thoreau writing from his cabin at Walden Pond, or even Alan Watts) now seems quaint and unpractical. Such writing is marginalized to minor academic journals, magazines without major circulation and unread blogs. In our fast-paced, overscheduled, overextended lives, we have less and less time for reflective thought. What we want is the manifesto, the screed, the two-minute online video. And if we somehow can’t find those (no matter, in a digital world they’ll find us), we’ll settle for PowerPoint-like bullet points.

For all its excesses, the sixties revolution represented a collective attempt by the young to acknowledge the gooey dimensions of life unheralded by a previous generation.

The psychedelic component of the sixties revolution had its casualties, but it also left a brilliant swath of creativity in its wake. Yet to this day, even milder psychoactive substances are highly threatening to the prickly powers that be because they are goo promoters: they sometimes lead users to question the fundamentals of establishment culture. This is one major, unacknowledged reason for the continuing war on some drugs, where the majority of people warehoused in the US military-industrial-prison complex have been convicted of drug possession – primarily cannabis.

Even within the sixties’ left there was a prickly/goopy divide. Many activists believed psychoactive substances of any kind were literally the opiate of the masses, distracting people from the hard work of organization and resistance. Others on the left weren’t interested in playing dualistic games of confrontation and becoming like the enemy in the process. They believed in a revolution from the inside out, not the other way around. The argument, though defensible, was conveniently bundled with hedonism. If free love came with their efforts, wasn’t that *prima facie* evidence it was working?

The sixties revolution morphed into a worldwide campaign to halt the war machine, scaring the pants off the power-brokers and plutocrats. The latter organized to roll-back the sixties revolution, using Reagan, Thatcher and Mulroney to kick off the Anglo-American blitzkrieg of privatization, deregulation and market liberalization. The trio’s philosophical position came by way of economists Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, but at the street level it was artistically nailed by the *cont’d p.21...*

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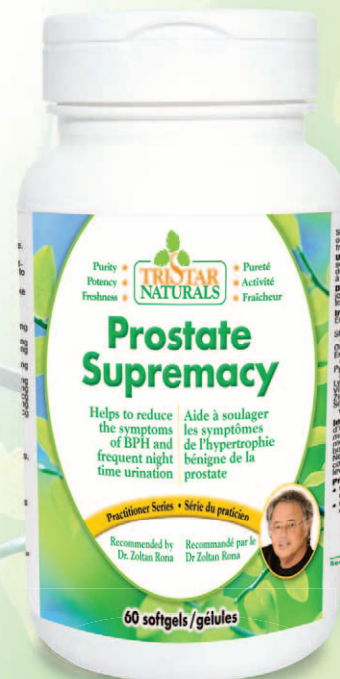
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JR: In your new book, I feel like you're the modern equivalent of the explorers that came to the new world, but an explorer and documenter of consciousness, discovering a new world.

ET: Yes, discovering is the right word. It's not that you need to make a great effort to attain it or bring it about or acquire it. It's discovering it's already there in you – conscious awareness that's obscured, or partially obscured, in many people. It's a discovery of something already there.

It's like waking up after a dream, because identification with the thinking mind and its stories and the old emotional conditioning is like being immersed in a kind of dream world, which very often turns into a nightmare – acting out old conditioned patterns again and again. The whole structure of the egoic mind is an old dysfunction.

There's some evidence that the ego started about 6,000 years ago, but nobody can say for sure. Before that, humans were in a state of innocence. When we go beyond the dysfunction of the ego, we regain our original innocence, but on a much deeper level. This is why Jesus said unless we become as little children we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

So, returning to the original innocence, and at the same time going much deeper into that with full awareness – that's the process. We're coming out of thousands of years of dreadful suffering, almost the whole of recorded history of humanity. If you really look at it in an unbiased way, as if you'd never seen it before, one cannot but admit that, to a large extent, 80 to 90 percent of it is a history of pathological insanity, the suffering that humans have created for themselves and, of course, inflicting it upon others.


JR: And exporting it through colonization to the new world.

ET: Yes, so the important part of the awakening process is the realization of the insanity in human history, collectively, to this day playing itself out in world events. Also, to be aware of the insanity within oneself – old, dysfunctional patterns that come again and again that create suffering. So when you see that you're insane, then you're not completely insane. Sanity comes the moment you realize the fact of insanity. To see insanity is not a negative thing.

JR: At least you're out of denial.

ET: Yes, that's why in the film *A Beautiful Mind*, for example, which is about a mathematical genius who did have a mental dysfunction, his mind was developed in certain areas but he was also insane. The viewer of the film doesn't know that until a certain point when the character realizes that many of his experiences are delusions. At that moment, his healing begins. He's not cured yet, but his healing begins because he's recognized his own insanity. That recognition can only come out of sanity, which is the awareness of unconditioned consciousness.

There's a dimension in us that has nothing to do with content. Self-realization is that I am not that. I'm not my story, not my grievances and hang-ups, not the story of me that I'm telling other people at parties or repeating in my head again and again. That is only form. It's temporary.

When you see what you're not, it's already liberating. Something inside you breathes a sigh of relief. Then, of course, the mind begins to ask, "What are you if you are not that?" It wants an answer. In other words, it wants some new form. It wants a new thought. There must be a thought that I am. But it doesn't work like that. That's why the great book the Tao Te Ching starts with the line that the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao because Tao – in the ancient Chinese way of putting it – is the formless dimension. You could say pure consciousness, but with any term we use we have to be careful it's not mistaken for "It." Otherwise, the mind comes in and says, "Oh, consciousness, yes. I believe that I'm consciousness." It's not another belief. It's finding that spaciousness inside yourself that's there when you let go of identification of form. 

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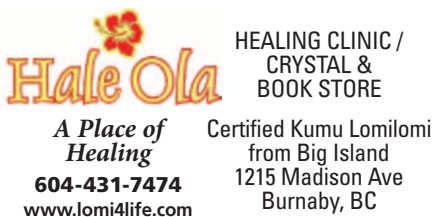
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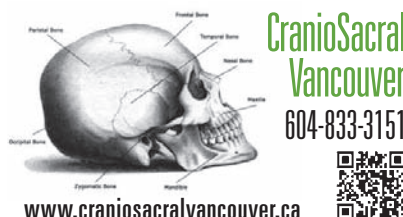
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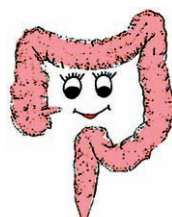
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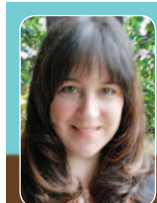
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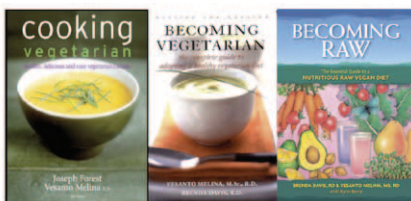
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 – Meryl Streep


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... Olson from p.11

iconic character Gordon “Greed is Good” Gekko in the 1987 film *Wall Street*.

Style-wise, the latter part of the twentieth century was a mixed bag, reflecting the cultural tensions of the echoing sixties and the revanchist eighties. In their demands for equality, women were co-opted by corporate capitalism and began wearing suits with giant shoulder pads, like football linebackers. Hairstyles got bigger – the “higher the hair, the closer to God,” as an expression from the American south puts it. A brave cross-section of men ambled around in mullets, which is the prickle/goo hairstyle *par excellence*: business up front and party at the back.

Luckily for most of us, the sixties influence still lingers in today's arts, music, business, law and gender relations. Consider the matter of same-sex marriage, which has been legal in Canada since 2005. Most Canadians believe that if two people are in love, their gender shouldn't keep a clerk from rubberstamping a form. That attitude is the direct result of the influence of sixties' consciousness working its way through successive generations, from boomers to Gen X to the millennials. You find this echo of the past in other areas as well, from the civic enthusiasm for bicycle lanes to the slow food movement/locavorism. Goo has flowed around the prickles.

People on the left condemn people on the right for allowing their biases to trump rational thought – and *vice versa*. In that regard, they are both right, but for the wrong reasons. In his book *The Righteous Mind*, author and social psychologist Jonathan Haidt argues that human beings aren't really designed to reason. We are designed to use reason to support our judgments, which have an emotional foundation.

Researchers have asked people moral questions and then timed their responses and scanned their brains. They discover that they reach their conclusions quickly and produce reasons later only to justify what they've decided. Our political biases come pre-packaged and are often



People on the left condemn people on the right for allowing their biases to trump rational thought – and vice versa

picked up from our family and peer group. We use reason as a tool to justify them.

Blue state voters often demean red state voters for repeatedly voting against their interests and sending class-war candidates to Washington. The right is not voting out of reason and such appeals by progressives are not going to work. They are “voting for their moral interests,” Haidt writes, selecting men of God rather than men of governance. But the left shouldn't applaud themselves too much for superior powers of reasoning. They are just as prone to emotional blind spots as the right, the author insists. Like their opponents on the right, they presume their moral compass points due north, when both sides are actually using astrolabes to chart different courses.


For example, the largely urban, educated, blue state progressives are part of the managerial class serving the

.1 percent. They have little understanding of the anger of the rural, undereducated red staters: working class people who have been at the deceiving end of corporate capitalism for decades, and have been the cross-generational cannon fodder for the Empire's wars. The red staters often have the wrong targets, but their rage is justified. The left does not get this at all.

The old Cartesian Divide between mind and body is a fiction; we need our ducts and glands as much as our cerebral fissures to be complete human beings, capable of both folly *and* wisdom. The true test for the left and right is to understand what each side is really about, without turning them into caricatures or demons.

Prickly and gooey people are “always arguing with each other,” Alan Watts noted, “but what they don't realize is neither one can take his position without the other person. Because you wouldn't know you advocated prickles unless there was someone advocating goo. You wouldn't know what a prickle was unless you knew what a goo was. Because life isn't either prickles or goo, it's either gooey prickles or prickly goo. They go together like back and front, male and female. And that's the answer to philosophy.”

Wave and particle, right brain and left brain, passive and active, giving and taking – it's all part of the dance of duality, which we live out daily at our macroscopic scale of existence. The trick is to keep the dance floor from becoming a battlefield. Because no final victory is possible between these contending forces without the whole shebang melting back into the Ground of Being, the Void, the quantum soup or whatever you want to call it.

Me, I prefer to call it “The Great Goo Prickle.” 

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January 2013

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Out with the old and in with the new is a mantra we're all familiar with. Now, we are determined to stick to our New Year's resolutions, which, of course, are generally totally forgotten by early February. Things may be a little different this year, though. The Sun and Pluto conjoin on December 30, 2012, just on the heels of a full Moon to boot. Your vow of commitment and determination to stick to the plan stands a better chance of becoming a reality if we use this planetary aspect as our fulcrum and pole in order to attain our goals. Our emotions are heightened at full Moon time and it probably isn't the best time to make a vow or promise that we may not be able to keep.

Neptune will visit Pisces for over a decade. It's a very interesting combination as Neptune is strongly affiliated with Pisces. Neptune represents our connection to the astral world and if this planet is prominent in our birth charts, we will be inclined to work along Neptunian lines. Neptune and Pisces are all about spirituality, devotion, compassion, illusion, film, music, acting and art. Positive Neptune types are inclined to work with the sick and disadvantaged in the world. When Neptune is weak or chal-



ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 19

Your solar tenth house is strongly activated throughout January amping up your professional status. Move towards your goals. Your world is changing and you are changing as never before. Fate and destiny lead the way. You're on a learning curve and what you learn these days will serve you well, far into the future. Stay original.



CANCER Jun 21 - Jul 22

The Cancer full Moon on December 28, 2012, had Pluto connected to it and it may have brought important changes in your life. The new Moon on January 11 in your opposite sign Capricorn may prompt you to make certain changes in your relationships. Those that support or oppose show up now. Prepare for a brighter future.



TAURUS Apr 20 - May 21

Journeys, short and long, may take place this month. You may stay home and still cover a lot of distance internally. You may be longing for changes on a deep spiritual level. Watch what you're doing on January 7 and 8, as there is potential for mishaps to take place. Patience and kindness work wonders.



LEO Jul 23 - Aug 22

You must set a workable pace, as the tempo is sure to speed up as this month moves along. Mars and Saturn lock horns as they both either square or oppose Leo. Most of this intensity will be experienced on January 7 and 8. The whole month will have a certain edge of excitement to it.



GEMINI May 22 - Jun 20

The last half of January will be a big improvement compared with the first half of the month. If you have anything of importance to handle or if there is something special you would like to achieve, make your moves on January 21 and 22 for the best possible results.



VIRGO Aug 23 - Sep 22

Your solar fifth house is strongly activated throughout January. The fifth house topics are children, romance, entertainment, investments and gambling. One or more of these topics should be activated now. Jupiter sits at the top of your solar chart enhancing professional and career interests. Your prospects for advancement are strong. Promotional strategies play out well.

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lenged in a birth chart, we find our con man, drug addict, fake evangelist and other wolves in sheep's clothing. The oceans and seas are Neptune / Pisces ruled as are all liquids such as oil. I pray it never happens because just one massive oil spill on the coast will change our lives for decades, if not longer. We live in the wild west and it's probably going to get a lot wilder before any true or lasting peace comes our way. Let's make peace wherever and however we can. The planet needs a healing. It is our individual and collective duty to extend love and help to all souls on our precious planet. We must count our sameness and commonalities and shame on the bunch of us if we don't. The cosmic intent of this Neptune / Pisces energy is to divert us away from the glitter, glitz and gold and to turn us towards higher aspirations such as service, love and devotion. Those born at this time will exhibit an unusual spiritual or psychic quality. Visionaries are needed and they will manifest at this time. We have two ways to go. We can move further into the tangled web of karmic indebtedness or we can learn to love one another and forgive each other. We are one people on one planet and we must learn to get along together. 



LIBRA Sep 23 - Oct 22

Matters related to home, family and real estate take up your time in the first few weeks of January. It would be a good time to conduct any type of research on the family tree. Headly topics such as law, philosophy, spirituality and politics will be on the menu. Travel plans are in the works.



SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21

Saturn slows down in January, becoming retrograde mid-February in your sign. Most people do not like the heavy influences of Saturn while others thrive and even excel under this planet's guidance. Striving for a degree, studying hard while others are partying and generally sacrificing and living carefully is what this Saturn transit is all about.



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21

Jupiter is a planet associated with abundance and good luck. There's another side to Jupiter when it is not well situated in a birth chart that can indicate waste and carelessness. Jupiter becomes stationary in your opposite sign Gemini at the end of the month. This is an important time of decisions regarding relationships.



CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19

The late December 2012 full Moon may have provided you with a glimpse into the hidden works of a situation. It is not a light, airy-fairy time period. The Capricorn new Moon on January 11 bodes very well and will bring on a new phase of internal transformation, growth and development in your life.



AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 19

Dynamic and feisty Mars moves through Aquarius this month bringing enthusiasm and action your way. Mars tangles with Saturn as they square off January 6 to 8. Difficult circumstances may develop and tempers could flare as frustrations boil over. My hint is to stay chill and if given lemons, make lemonade.



PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20

It's a blessing in this lifetime to experience Neptune's visit to Pisces. Magical, mystical, mysterious scenarios come and go like clouds. Dive into the pool of dreams and diversions, adventure and excitement. You may feel strongly motivated to serve, help and heal wherever you can. Artists and musicians will probably receive inspiration from on high.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109

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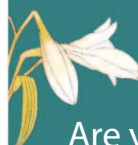
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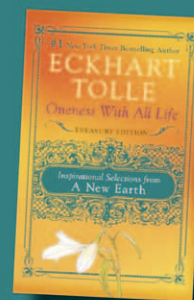
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JAN 13

J.Krishnamurti in Beyond Myth and Tradition series with Evelyn Blau: The Mirror of Relationship. Free DVD showing, dialogue, refreshments. Church of Truth, Victoria, BC, 1:45pm. Look us up on and register at www.meetup.com/The-British-Columbia-Krishnamurti-Group krishnamurtigroup@live.com, 250-474-1488.

JAN 17

Happiness Workshop - Starting Thursday Jan 17th, 7:15-8:45pm, 8 Sessions with Bob Molavi, Happiness Coach. West End Community Centre, Register: www.westendcc.ca Search: Happiness, 604-257-8333

JAN 18 - 20

Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7:30 pm \$10; Course \$395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology, 604-875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

JAN 18 - 20

Spirit Led Path Workshop with John Catalina An opportunity to go deep into our hearts. Be fulfilled on our own unique path. Letting go of what doesn't serve. South Surrey, 1-760-415-1997, johncatalina@gmail.com www.spiritledpath.com

JAN 20

Enlightened Living - Free Class, 2pm
HOMEMADE HERBAL SYRUPS FOR COLD & FLU SEASON. Meditation & Ecology Centre, 11011 Shell Rd. Richmond. Info/pre-registration: Linda, 604-985-5840.

JAN 20

Brahma Kumaris Meditation Centre invites you to the lecture "From Ordinary to Extraordinary". What would make you extraordinary? Please come and find out. Sunday 5-7PM, Hilton Hotel Metrotown, 6083 McKay Ave, Burnaby. Free admission. Info: 604-436-4795, vancouver@ca.bkwsu.org

JAN 24

Oprah Winfrey Live in Vancouver - at Rogers Arena, see Preferred Nutrition Ad page 3.

JAN 25 - 27

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J.Krishnamurti in Beyond Myth and Tradition series with Evelyn Blau: The Mirror of Relationship. Free DVD showing, dialogue, refreshments. Vancouver Public Library downtown, 7th Floor, Board Breakout Room, 1:45pm. Look us up on and register at www.meetup.com/The-British-Columbia-Krishnamurti-Group krishnamurtigroup@live.com, 604-354-1534.

JAN 27

S.O.P.: SAVE OUR PLANET From competition and separation to a new understanding of the meaning of our lives and planet. Humanity's Elder Brothers are stepping forward now to help us with a rebuilding process where sharing the resources of the world will lead to justice and peace. Sunday 2:30 pm, Roundhouse Community Centre (Pacific @ Davie), FREE. 778-866-9568 www.taracanada.org/pp3/.

JAN 30

Danielle LaPorte The Desire Map / Firestarter Sessions & **Gabrielle Bernstein** Spirit Junkie, May Cause Miracles at Jewel Ballroom 1495 West 8th, Vancouver. Info 250.479.4235 www.MiracleDesire.eventbrite.ca www.VictoriaYogaConference.com

JAN 31 - FEB 3

Guelph Organic Conference & Expo 2013 - Organics - What's the Buzz? More info at www.guelphorganicconf.ca See ad pg 14

FEB 1 - 3

Victoria Yoga Conference welcomes more than 50 teaches - includes asanas, workshops, marketplace and community classes 250.479.4235 www.VictoriaYogaConference.com See ad page 5.

FEB 2 & 3

"What shall I do with my life?" One-day workshops. Visualize and manifest a magnificent life. Vancouver, \$100, 778-893-2728, www.whatshallidowithmylife.org

FEB 5

Meme Wars - AdBusters: Free Public Event 7pm, UBC SUB Building, in the Norm Theatre, sponsored by Adbuster, AMS Student Society, Common Ground and Banyen Books and Sound, see ad page 26 for details.

FEB 6

How to be a Better Lover - with Catherine O'Kane, 7.30pm sharp, Unity of Vancouver, 5840 Oak Street at 41st

FEB 10

The Psoas: Power from the Ground - Yoga Therapy Workshop @ The Path Yoga Studio, more info at leila-yoga@shaw.ca 604-536-7894

FEB 15, 16 & 17

The Wellness Show - Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre see ad page 27 for details, or www.thewellnessshow.com 604-983-2794

FEB 16

Psychic & Wellness Fair 2013 - Best Western Coquitlam, 319 North Road, Doors open @ 10am, Readers, Healers, Vendors, Holistic Health & Seminars. More info www.tandtvancouver.com

FEB 22 - 24

Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7:30 pm \$10; Course \$395. Pacific

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MARCH 2 - 3

Sound Healing - Soul Voice™ 2-Day Workshop, 9:30 am - 6:00 pm. 303 East 8th Ave, Vancouver. \$390 (Early Bird \$330 till Jan.11th). Unleash your authentic voice. Listen, sing, unlock your creative expression and communicate from your heart. Booking essential db.boyko@gmail.com www.soulvoice.net/coursesandschedule_north_america.html

MARCH 17

Yoga Therapy for Anxiety & Depression: The Path Yoga Studio, more info at leila-yoga@shaw.ca 604-536-7894

MARCH 20 - 24

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Climate change on-screen



From *Chasing Ice*: Greenland Ice Sheet, July 2009. Photo by James Balog, © 2009.

Recently, I've been filming University of Victoria climate scientist Dr. Andrew Weaver, who is campaigning as the BC Green Party candidate for the Oak Bay Gordon Head riding in Victoria in the May provincial elections. As I research the project, I've been looking back at how climate change has been covered on-screen in the past.

Moving chronologically, first is *Soylent Green* (1973). It would be another 15 years before NASA climate scientist James Hansen would give his seminal testimony to Congress, but there was that icon of greenie leftism, Charlton Heston, sweating on a bike-powered generator to keep the apartment lights on as he cursed the "Greenhouse Effect." As detective Heston tracks down the source of a miracle "green" food, we see a futuristic urban dystopia teeming with street people and littered with seventies gas-guzzlers. It's a wonderfully dated sci-fi.

An Inconvenient Truth (2006) is the climate change movie the deniers love to hate. Yet for all the (mostly unfounded) criticisms of selective use of data, Al Gore's Oscar-winning documentary remains a historical landmark, a film whose message we should all be conversant with. With glaciers and ice caps receding at an accelerating rate, the film's prediction for an ice free Arctic by 2050 looks positively conservative. Extreme weather events are more common. The documentary gave us 10 years before we reached the tipping point. It's looking a mite close for comfort.

Picking up from *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Everything's Cool* (2007) looks at how climate deniers, with fossil fuel lobby funding, have suppressed scientific evidence and created confusion among the public. It uses humour and poppy editing style to illustrate the difficulties faced by a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and climatologist for the Weather Channel, among others, in getting the message out. Considering the recent US presidential election campaign passed with a deafening silence surrounding climate change, the issues vexing campaigners almost a decade ago (the storyline turns on Hurricane Katrina in 2005) are still sadly relevant.

Released before the climate summit in Copenhagen, *Home* (2009) is a beautifully shot and quietly moving poem on humanity's impact on the planet. Glenn Close's narrative takes a little time to work its spell, particularly given its sombre, elegiac tone, but with its swooping helicopter footage, it provides a much more evocative explanation of our place in the carbon cycle than any PowerPoint presentation could. The film is free on YouTube. Go to the 59:14 for the section linking the tarsands with climate and melting of the polar ice caps.

No round-up of climate change films would be complete without mention of James Hansen's recent Ted talk from earlier this year "*Why I Must Speak out About Climate Change*." In the 20-minute talk (free online), the former NASA scientist explains why he is being carted off by the police at climate protests when he should be enjoying his sunset years in quiet retirement, and how we can avoid a 5-metre sea level rise this century.

Also look out for screenings this year of *Chasing Ice* (2012), portraying photographer James Balog's heroic endeavours to capture the rapid retreat of glaciers and polar ice caps on film; *Revolution* (2012), *Sharkwater* director Rob Stewart's rallying call to tackle climate change and the catastrophic consequences of ocean acidification caused by increased CO₂; and *The Message* (2013) Naomi Klein's post-Sandy documentary, which will apparently feature the "Do The Math" campaign headed by 350.org's Bill McGibben. ◀

More on Robert Alstead's film project at www.iofilm.com

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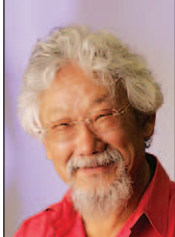
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Leadership on climate needed

The race to become leader of the world's most powerful democracy often seemed disconnected from reality. During debates, the two main candidates stooped to insults, half-truths and outright lies. The overall campaign included appallingly ignorant statements about women.

But the most bewildering disconnect was over the greatest threat the world faces: global warming. Republican candidate Mitt Romney only mentioned it mockingly and President Barack Obama brought it up in passing toward the end of the campaign and in one line during his acceptance speech... Obama has had more to say since being elected to his second term. "I am a firm believer that climate change is real, that it is impacted by human behaviour and carbon emissions and as a consequence I think we have an obligation to future generations to do something about it," he told reporters at a post-election news conference.

He went on to list his accomplishments on climate during his first term: better fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks, increased clean-energy production and investment in "breakthrough technologies that could further remove carbon from our atmosphere." But those were inadequate, given the scope of the problem. He should have done more. As investment strategist Jeremy Grantham recently wrote in *Nature*, "President Barack Obama missed the chance of a lifetime to get a climate bill passed..."

Part of the problem is the increasingly dysfunctional nature of a polarized and paralyzed US political system, including a Congress dominated by anti-environmental, anti-tax and often anti-government Republicans. Many of us – not just Americans – hope the president will show stronger leadership this time around. Unfortunately, his news conference statement sent mixed messages. Although he acknowledged that more should be done and promised to have "a wide-ranging conversation..." about reducing carbon, he also said, "If the message somehow is that we're going to ignore jobs and growth simply

to address climate change, I don't think anyone's going to go for that. I won't go for that."

He went on to acknowledge the costs of climate-related natural disasters and mentioned the danger of climate change as "something we're passing on to future generations that's going to be very expensive and very painful to deal with." In trying to say the right thing without alienating the fossil fuel industry and other moneyed interests, he came across as confused. Even though it will be expensive and painful not to act, he's not prepared to take the necessary steps if it will impede jobs and growth. But climate change is already costing the US and the rest of the world – in money, human health and lives.

Climate change is already costing the US and the rest of the world – in money, human health and lives.

Because our leaders – in Canada and the US – have too long listened to fossil fuel interests and their denier minions rather than scientists, it will be more difficult than it might have been to reduce carbon emissions to the extent necessary to prevent runaway global warming (if it's not too late already) and it may require more sacrifice than it would have, had we acted sooner. But there are many ways to protect the health of the planet and the future of humanity without destroying economies.

If America wants to retain its position as a global power, its president must listen to the people and show strong leadership at this turning point in human history. ◀

Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation communications manager **Ian Hanington**. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org



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